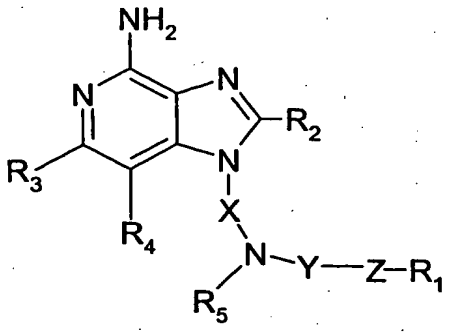
WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A compound of the formula (I):



(I)

wherein **X** is alkylene or alkenylene;

Y is –CO– or –CS–;

Z is a bond, –O–, or –S–;

$\mathbf{R_1}$ is aryl, heteroaryl, heterocyclyl, alkyl or alkenyl, each of which may be unsubstituted or substituted by one or more substituents independently selected from the group consisting of:

-alkyl;

-alkenyl;

-aryl;

-heteroaryl;

-heterocyclyl;

-substituted cycloalkyl;

-substituted aryl;

-substituted heteroaryl;

substituted heterocyclyl;

-O-alkyl;

-O-$(alkyl)_{0-1}$-aryl;

-O-$(alkyl)_{0-1}$-substituted aryl;

-O-$(alkyl)_{0-1}$-heteroaryl;

-O-$(alkyl)_{0-1}$-substituted heteroaryl;

-O-(alkyl)$_{0-1}$-heterocyclyl;

-O-(alkyl)$_{0-1}$-substituted heterocyclyl;

-COOH;

-CO-O-alkyl;

-CO-alkyl;

-S(O)$_{0-2}$-alkyl;

-S(O)$_{0-2}$–(alkyl)$_{0-1}$-aryl;

-S(O)$_{0-2}$–(alkyl)$_{0-1}$-substituted aryl;

-S(O)$_{0-2}$–(alkyl)$_{0-1}$-heteroaryl;

-S(O)$_{0-2}$–(alkyl)$_{0-1}$-substituted heteroaryl;

-S(O)$_{0-2}$–(alkyl)$_{0-1}$-heterocyclyl;

-S(O)$_{0-2}$–(alkyl)$_{0-1}$-substituted heterocyclyl;

-(alkyl)$_{0-1}$- N(R_6)$_2$;

-(alkyl)$_{0-1}$-NR_6-CO-O-alkyl;

-(alkyl)$_{0-1}$-NR_6-CO-alkyl;

-(alkyl)$_{0-1}$-NR_6-CO-aryl;

-(alkyl)$_{0-1}$-NR_6-CO-substituted aryl;

-(alkyl)$_{0-1}$-NR_6-CO-heteroaryl;

-(alkyl)$_{0-1}$-NR_6-CO-substituted heteroaryl;

-N_3;

-halogen;

-haloalkyl;

-haloalkoxy;

-CO-haloalkyl;

-CO-haloalkoxy;

-NO_2;

-CN;

-OH;

-SH; and in the case of alkyl, alkenyl, and heterocyclyl, oxo;

R_2 is selected from the group consisting of:

-hydrogen;

-alkyl;

-alkenyl;

-aryl;

-substituted aryl;

-heteroaryl;

-substituted heteroaryl;

-alkyl-O-alkyl;

-alkyl-S-alkyl;

-alkyl-O-aryl;

-alkyl-S-aryl:

-alkyl-O- alkenyl;

-alkyl-S- alkenyl; and

-alkyl or alkenyl substituted by one or more substituents selected from the group consisting of:

-OH;

-halogen;

-$N(R_6)_2$;

-$CO\text{-}N(R_6)_2$;

-$CS\text{-}N(R_6)_2$;

-$SO_2\text{-}N(R_6)_2$;

-$NR_6\text{-}CO\text{-}C_{1\text{-}10}$ alkyl;

-$NR_6\text{-}CS\text{-}C_{1\text{-}10}$ alkyl;

-$NR_6\text{-}SO_2\text{-}C_{1\text{-}10}$ alkyl;

-$CO\text{-}C_{1\text{-}10}$ alkyl;

-$CO\text{-}O\text{-}C_{1\text{-}10}$ alkyl;

-N_3;

-aryl;

-substituted aryl;

-heteroaryl;

-substituted heteroaryl;

-heterocyclyl;

-substituted heterocyclyl;

-CO-aryl;

-CO-(substituted aryl);

-CO-heteroaryl; and

-CO-(substituted heteroaryl);

$\mathbf{R_3}$ and $\mathbf{R_4}$ are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, alkyl, alkenyl, halogen, alkoxy, amino, alkylamino, dialkylamino and alkylthio;

$\mathbf{R_5}$ is H or $C_{1\text{-}10}$ alkyl, or R_5 can join with X to form a ring that contains one or two hetero atoms; or when R_1 is alkyl, R_5 and R_1 can join to form a ring;

each $\mathbf{R_6}$ is independently H or $C_{1\text{-}10}$ alkyl;

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

2. A compound or salt of claim 1 wherein Y is –CO–.

3. A compound or salt of claim 1 wherein Y is –CO– and Z is a bond.

4. A compound or salt of claim 3 wherein R_1 is alkyl, aryl or substituted aryl.

5. A compound or salt of claim 1 wherein Y is –CS–.

6. A compound or salt of claim 1 wherein Y is –CS– and Z is a bond.

7. A compound or salt of claim 6 wherein R_5 is H and R_1 is aryl or substituted aryl.

8. A compound or salt of claim 1 wherein R_5 is H.

9. A compound or salt of claim 1 wherein Z is a bond.

10. A compound or salt of claim 9 wherein R_1 is alkyl, aryl, or substituted aryl.

11. A compound or salt of claim 10 wherein R_1 is alkyl.

12. A compound or salt of claim 1 wherein R_5 is alkyl and R_1 is alkyl.

13. A compound or salt of claim 1 wherein R_2 is H, alkyl or alkyl–O–alkyl.

14. A compound or salt of claim 1 wherein X is $-(CH_2)_{2-4}-$.

15. A compound or salt of claim 1 wherein R_3 and R_4 are independently H or alkyl.

16. A compound or salt of claim 1 wherein R_3 and R_4 are both methyl.

17. A compound selected from the group consisting of:

N-[4-(4-Amino-2-butyl-6,7-dimethyl-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-1-yl)butyl]benzamide;

N-[4-(4-Amino-2-butyl-6,7-dimethyl-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-1-yl)butyl]-4-[[2-(dimethylamino)ethoxy](phenyl)methyl]benzamide;

N-{4-[4-amino-2-(ethoxymethyl)-6-methyl-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-1-yl]butyl}-2-methylpropanamide;

N-[4-(4-amino-6,7-dimethyl-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-1-yl)butyl]acetamide;

2-(ethoxymethyl)-1-[2-(1-isobutyrylpiperidin-4-yl)ethyl]-6,7-dimethyl-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-4-amine;

N-[3-(4-amino-2,6,7-trimethyl-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-1-yl)propyl]acetamide;

N-[3-(4-amino-2,6,7-trimethyl-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-1-yl)propyl]-2-methylpropanamide;

N-{3-[4-amino-2-(ethoxymethyl)-6,7-dimethyl-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-1-yl]propyl}acetamide;

N-{3-[4-amino-2-(ethoxymethyl)-6,7-dimethyl-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-1-yl]propyl}-2-methylpropanamide;

N-[2-(4-amino-2,6,7-trimethyl-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-1-yl)ethyl]acetamide;

N-[2-(4-amino-2,6,7-trimethyl-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-1-yl)ethyl]-2-methylpropanamide;

N-{2-[4-amino-2-(ethoxymethyl)-6,7-dimethyl-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-c]pyridin-1-yl]-1,1-dimethylethyl}acetamide;

N-{2-[4-amino-2-(ethoxymethyl)-6,7-dimethyl-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-c]pyridin-1-yl]-1,1-dimethylethyl}benzamide; and

N-[4-(4-Amino-6,7-dimethyl-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-1-yl)butyl]-4-[[2-(dimethylamino)ethoxy](phenyl)methyl]benzamide;

N-[4-(4-amino-6,7-dimethyl-2-propyl-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*c*]pyridin-1-yl)butyl]acetamide; or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

18. A pharmaceutical composition comprising a therapeutically effective amount of a compound of claim 1 in combination with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

19. A pharmaceutical composition comprising a therapeutically effective amount of a compound of claim 2 in combination with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

20. A pharmaceutical composition comprising a therapeutically effective amount of a compound of claim 17 in combination with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

21. A method of inducing cytokine biosynthesis in an animal comprising administering a therapeutically effective amount of a compound of claim 1 to the animal.

22. A method of treating a viral disease in an animal comprising administering a therapeutically effective amount of a compound of claim 1 to the animal.

23. A method of treating a neoplastic disease in an animal comprising administering a therapeutically effective amount of a compound of claim 1 to the animal.

24. A method of inducing cytokine biosynthesis in an animal comprising administering a therapeutically effective amount of a compound of claim 2 to the animal.

25. A method of treating a viral disease in an animal comprising administering a therapeutically effective amount of a compound of claim 2 to the animal.

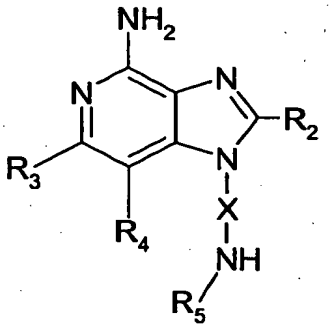
26. A method of treating a neoplastic disease in an animal comprising administering a therapeutically effective amount of a compound of claim 2 to the animal.

27. A method of inducing cytokine biosynthesis in an animal comprising administering a therapeutically effective amount of a compound of claim 17 to the animal.

28. A method of treating a viral disease in an animal comprising administering a therapeutically effective amount of a compound of claim 17 to the animal.

29. A method of treating a neoplastic disease in an animal comprising administering a therapeutically effective amount of a compound of claim 17 to the animal.

30. A compound of the formula (II):



(II)

wherein: **X** is alkylene or alkenylene;

$\mathbf{R_2}$ is selected from the group consisting of:

-hydrogen;

-alkyl;

-alkenyl;

-aryl;

-substituted aryl;

-heteroaryl;

-substituted heteroaryl;

-alkyl-O-alkyl;

-alkyl-S-alkyl;

-alkyl-O-aryl;

-alkyl-S-aryl:

-alkyl-O- alkenyl;

-alkyl-S- alkenyl; and

-alkyl or alkenyl substituted by one or more substituents selected from the group consisting of:

-OH;

-halogen;

-$N(R_6)_2$;

-$CO\text{-}N(R_6)_2$;

-$CS\text{-}N(R_6)_2$;

-$SO_2\text{-}N(R_6)_2$;

-$NR_6\text{-}CO\text{-}C_{1\text{-}10}$ alkyl;

-$NR_6\text{-}CS\text{-}C_{1\text{-}10}$ alkyl;

-$NR_6\text{-}SO_2\text{-}C_{1\text{-}10}$ alkyl;

-$CO\text{-}C_{1\text{-}10}$ alkyl;

-$CO\text{-}O\text{-}C_{1\text{-}10}$ alkyl;

-N_3;

-aryl;

-substituted aryl;

-heteroaryl;

-substituted heteroaryl;

-heterocyclyl;

-substituted heterocyclyl;

-CO-aryl;

-CO-(substituted aryl);

-CO-heteroaryl; and

-CO-(substituted heteroaryl);

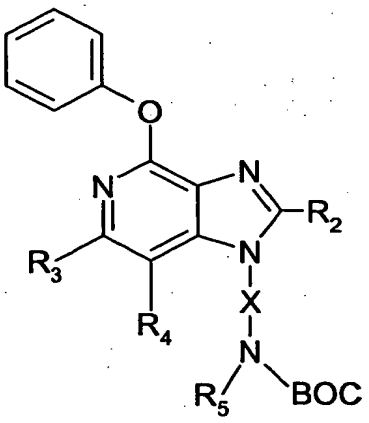
R_3 and R_4 are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, alkyl, alkenyl, halogen, alkoxy, amino, alkylamino, dialkylamino and alkylthio;

$\mathbf{R_5}$ is H or $C_{1\text{-}10}$ alkyl, or R_5 can join with X to form a ring that contains one or two hetero atoms;

each $\mathbf{R_6}$ is independently H or $C_{1\text{-}10}$ alkyl;

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

31. A compound of the formula (IV):



(IV)

wherein: **X** is alkylene or alkenylene;

$\mathbf{R_2}$ is selected from the group consisting of:

-hydrogen;

-alkyl;

-alkenyl;

-aryl;

-substituted aryl;

-heteroaryl;

-substituted heteroaryl;

-alkyl-O-alkyl;

-alkyl-S-alkyl;

-alkyl-O-aryl;

-alkyl-S-aryl:

-alkyl-O- alkenyl;

-alkyl-S- alkenyl; and

-alkyl or alkenyl substituted by one or more substituents selected from the group consisting of:

-OH;

-halogen;

-$N(R_6)_2$;

-$CO\text{-}N(R_6)_2$;

-$CS\text{-}N(R_6)_2$;

-$SO_2\text{-}N(R_6)_2$;

-$NR_6\text{-}CO\text{-}C_{1\text{-}10}$ alkyl;

-$NR_6\text{-}CS\text{-}C_{1\text{-}10}$ alkyl;

-$NR_6\text{-}SO_2\text{-}C_{1\text{-}10}$ alkyl;

-$CO\text{-}C_{1\text{-}10}$ alkyl;

-$CO\text{-}O\text{-}C_{1\text{-}10}$ alkyl;

-N_3;

-aryl;

-substituted aryl;

-heteroaryl;

-substituted heteroaryl;

-heterocyclyl;

-substituted heterocyclyl;

-CO-aryl;

-CO-(substituted aryl);

-CO-heteroaryl; and

-CO-(substituted heteroaryl);

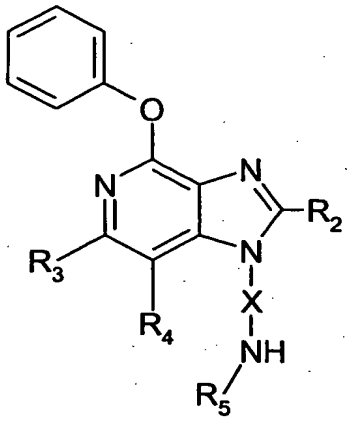
$\mathbf{R_3}$ and $\mathbf{R_4}$ are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, alkyl, alkenyl, halogen, alkoxy, amino, alkylamino, dialkylamino and alkylthio;

$\mathbf{R_5}$ is H or $C_{1\text{-}10}$ alkyl, or R_5 can join with X to form a ring that contains one or two hetero atoms;

each $\mathbf{R_6}$ is independently H or $C_{1\text{-}10}$ alkyl;

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

32. A compound of the formula (V):



(V)

wherein: **X** is alkylene or alkenylene;

$\mathbf{R_2}$ is selected from the group consisting of:

-hydrogen;

-alkyl;

-alkenyl;

-aryl;

-substituted aryl;

-heteroaryl;

-substituted heteroaryl;

-alkyl-O-alkyl;

-alkyl-S-alkyl;

-alkyl-O-aryl;

-alkyl-S-aryl:

-alkyl-O- alkenyl;

-alkyl-S- alkenyl; and

-alkyl or alkenyl substituted by one or more substituents selected from the group consisting of:

-OH;

-halogen;

$-N(R_6)_2$;

-CO-N(R_6)$_2$;

-CS-N(R_6)$_2$;

-SO_2-N(R_6)$_2$;

-NR_6-CO-C_{1-10} alkyl;

-NR_6-CS-C_{1-10} alkyl;

-NR_6- SO_2-C_{1-10} alkyl;

-CO-C_{1-10} alkyl;

-CO-O-C_{1-10} alkyl;

-N_3;

-aryl;

-substituted aryl;

-heteroaryl;

-substituted heteroaryl;

-heterocyclyl;

-substituted heterocyclyl;

-CO-aryl;

-CO-(substituted aryl);

-CO-heteroaryl; and

-CO-(substituted heteroaryl);

R_3 and R_4 are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, alkyl, alkenyl, halogen, alkoxy, amino, alkylamino, dialkylamino and alkylthio;

R_5 is H or C_{1-10} alkyl, or R_5 can join with X to form a ring that contains one or two hetero atoms;

each R_6 is independently H or C_{1-10} alkyl;

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.